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THE
EARLY HISTORY OF FORMOSA;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

FATHER DE MAILLA, S.J.,

IN THE "LETTRES EDIFIANTES ET CURIEUSES,"

1715.

Reprinted from "The Celestial Empire."



LOUREIRO & Co., PRINTERS, SHANGHAI.

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WE have translated for the benefit of our readers, a very quaint and valuable account of the ancient condition of Formosa, given by one of the Jesuit Fathers who visited the Island in the year 1715. His story is told with the utmost simplicity, and is remarkable for the absence of any of those rhetorical flourishes or apparent exaggerations which are so often to be found in the writings of early travellers. The style of the original is graceful throughout, and we recommend the paper to the perusal of our subscribers as being especially interesting at the present moment, when the feuds of bygone ages are being revived, and a war is imminent between the two nations who colonised the Island so long ago. The history of Formosa is here presented to us in a rapid and truthful sketch, combining all the value of acknowledged facts with the charm which is inseparable from the most romantic story.

"The Celestial Empire,"

Shanghai, 8th Aug., 1874,

THE EARLY HISTORY OF FORMOSA;

FROM THE FRENCH OF FATHER DE MAILLA, S.J.

[*Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*, A.D. 1715.]

The Island of Formosa is not entirely under the dominion of the Chinese; it is divided, as it were, into two parts, East and West, by a chain of high mountains that commences at the southernmost point of *Sa-ma-ki-tow*, and only finishes actually at the north sea of the Island, at the fortress formerly built by the Spaniards, called *Ke-lung-chai* by the Chinese. It is only what lies to the west of these mountains that belongs to China, i.e., that which is enclosed between $22^{\circ} 8'$ and $25^{\circ} 20'$ of north latitude. The eastern portion is inhabited, say the Chinese, by none but barbarians. The country itself is mountainous, untilled and wild. The character that we have heard ascribed to the natives differs but very slightly from what is said of the savages of America. They have been depicted to us as less brutal than the Iroquois, far chaster than the Indians, of a gentle and peaceable disposition, loving and succouring one another, disinterested, laying no store on gold or silver, of which we hear they have various mines; but vindictive to excess, without laws, government, or police, subsisting entirely by fisheries and the chase; in short, without religion and acknowledging no God. Such is the character which the Chinese affirm to be that of the people who live in the eastern part of Formosa. But as the statement of a Chinaman is not too trustworthy when it is a question of a foreign nation, I cannot guarantee this portraiture, especially as at present there is no communication between the Chinese and the aborigines, and that for nearly twenty years they have been waging a continual war amongst themselves.

The Chinese had barely achieved the subjugation of Formosa, when they became cognizant of the gold-mines which the Island contained. No sooner had they enforced the submission of the people, than they searched on all sides for these treasures; and not being able to find them on the western side of the Island, of which they were the masters, they resolved to investigate the eastern part, where they were assured the treasures lay. They then equipped a small vessel in order to go

there by sea, not wishing to expose themselves to the unknown mountains, where they would have run the risk of their lives. They were received with much kindness by the islanders, who generously offered them their houses, abundance of food, and every assistance in their power. The Chinese sojourned with them about a week ; but all the trouble they took to discover the mines proved abortive, whether from the fault of the interpreter who explained their design to the inhabitants, or whether from fear and prudential motives, not wishing to give umbrage to a nation which had reason to fear the yoke of the Chinese. But however this may have been, of all the gold for which they were searching, they only discovered a few ingots exposed in the cabins, by which these poor people set very little store. Dangerous temptation for a Chinaman ! It was owing to this that, ill-contented with the success of their voyage, and impatient to possess the nuggets exposed to their gaze, they devised a stratagem of unexampled cruelty. They equipped their vessel, and these worthy folk furnished them with everything that was necessary for their return. They then invited their hosts to a grand banquet that they had prepared, they said, as some slight token of their gratitude. But they caused these poor men to drink until they were thoroughly inebriated ; and while they were plunged in the profound slumber of intoxication, they massacred them to a man, seized upon the treasures, and set sail. The chief of this atrocious expedition is still living in Formosa, without the Chinese having even dreamt of punishing his crime. Nevertheless he has not remained absolutely unpunished ; but the innocent bore the penalty which was deserved by the guilty. The news of such a horrid crime had no sooner spread through the eastern part of the Island than the islanders invaded with full arms the northern province which belonged to China, slaughtered in cold blood all whom they met—men, women and children—and set fire to several dwellings. Since that time the two factions have been continually at war. As I was obliged to pass in sight of the habitations of these islanders, I was accompanied by an escort of two hundred soldiers during the whole time I was engaged in making a map of the south. Notwithstanding this precaution, they came down upon us, on one occasion, to the number of thirty or forty, armed with arrows and javelins ; but as we were very much the stronger of the two, they retired.

That part of Formosa possessed by the Chinese richly deserves the name which has been given to it. It is a most beautiful country ; the air is pure and serene ; the soil is fertile in all manner of grain, and watered with numerous little rivers which flow down from the mountains that separate the eastern portion of the island from the west. The earth yields corn and rice in abundance. Nearly all the fruits of India are found there—oranges, pine-apples, guavas, papayas, and cocoa-nuts. The soil would also produce our own European fruit-trees if we planted them. We found peaches, apricots, figs, grapes, chestnuts, and pomegranates.

They also cultivate a kind of melon that they call water-melons. They are much larger than those of Europe, of an oblong shape, though sometimes round, full of a cool, sugary juice which is much to the palate of the Chinese ; but at the same time they are certainly not comparable to those which come from Pernambuco, and which I have eaten in All Saints' Bay in South America. Tobacco and sugar-cane also grow freely ; and all the trees are so agreeably placed, that when the rice is transplanted in the usual manner in cross-lines, like a chess-board, the whole of this extensive plain resembles a simple landscape far less than a vast garden, which has been carefully cultivated by skilful and industrious hands.

As the country hitherto has been only inhabited by a savage and unpolished people, horses, sheep and goats are very rare ; even the pig, so common in China, is here expensive enough ; but hens, ducks, and tame geese abound in great numbers. There are also quantities of oxen, which are used as beasts of burden in the scarcity of horses, asses and mules. They are broken-in very early ; and, would you believe it, their paces are really as good and as swift as those of the best horses ! They have bridles, harness and saddles, frequently of great value. And what amused us much was, that the Chinese were just as proud, when riding on these animals, as if they were mounted upon the finest horse in Europe.

With the exception of apes and deer, which are there seen in herds, wild beasts are very scarce ; and if there are any bears, wild-boars, wolves, tigers, and leopards as in China, they must all be in the mountains on the east side of the Island, for there are none in the west. There are also very few birds. The most common are pheasants, which are hardly allowed to breed. In short, I think one may fairly say that if the water of the Formosan rivers were as good to drink as it is useful to irrigate the rice-fields, there would be nothing more to wish for in the Island. But the water is, to foreigners, a poison for which it seems almost impossible to find a remedy. A servant in the employ of the Governor of the southern department, whom I had in my suite, a strong, robust man, relying upon the strength of his constitution, refused to believe what he was told as to the properties of the water, and drank it ; and in five days he was dead, all cordials and antidotes being utterly powerless to save him. The water of the capital is the only water it is possible to drink ; and the local mandarins took the trouble to send for it in carts for our use. At the foot of a mountain at the south-west, about a league from Fong-kan hien, there is a spring from which issues a little rivulet of a whitish blue colour, the poisonous odour of which is absolutely insufferable.

The Chinese divide their possessions in Formosa into three *Hien* or subaltern governments, which are dependent upon the capital of the Island. They are *Tai-wan-hien*, *Fong-kan-hien*, and *Chu-lo-hien*. Each has its own officers who are under the immediate authority of the Governor-general, and he, in common with the whole of the Island, is subject to the Viceroy of Fo-kien, of which *Tai-wan* or Formosa is a part.

The capital, which is called *Tai-wan foo*, is considerably peopled, and boasts a fine approach and extensive trade. Indeed, it compares well with the greater number of the best and most populated cities in China. One finds there everything that can possibly be desired, both what is furnished by the Island itself, such as rice, sugar, sugar-candy, tobacco, salt, and smoked venison—which is much esteemed by the Chinese; fruits of all sorts, cloths of different kinds, wool, cotton, hemp, the bark of certain trees and plants which somewhat resemble the nettle, and a quantity of medicinal herbs, which are for the most part unknown in Europe; and also what is imported from abroad, such as Chinese and Indian textures, silk-goods, varnish, porcelain, and various European handiwork. There are but few mulberry trees in the Island, and consequently very little native silk or manufactures; but the profits made by those who have commenced to trade in this direction will probably induce others to follow in their wake. If it were free to Chinamen to pass into the Island of Formosa and fix their abode there, I doubt not but that several families would have been already transported; but in order to do so, one has to obtain pass-ports from the Chinese mandarins, and these pass-ports cost a handsome sum of money; besides which, it is necessary to give securities. Nor is this all; for when one arrives in the Island it is also necessary to make a present of money to the mandarin, who keeps a sharp eye on both those who come in and those who go out. The man who offers him nothing, or at best a trifle, may safely expect to be sent back again, notwithstanding that he may be provided with the best of pass-ports. This excessive precaution is doubtless owing to the natural greediness with which the Chinese amass money. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that it is good policy to prevent anybody and everybody from going to Formosa, especially as the Tartars hold the mastery of China; for Formosa is a very important place, and if a Chinaman were to obtain possession of it, it would probably bring about very great troubles in the Empire. Besides, the Tartars keep a garrison there ten thousand strong, commanded by a *Tsung-ping* or Lieutenant-general, two *Foo-tsiang* or Field-marshals, and several subaltern officers who are changed once every three years, and even oftener should occasion occur. During our stay there, they changed a brigade of four hundred men, and cashiered the principal officer for having insulted a literary mandarin whom they pretended not to have administered justice with respect to the death of the brother of one of their comrades, who had been killed a few days previously.

The streets of the capital are nearly all laid out in lines, and are all covered during seven or eight months in the year, in order to protect them from the fierce rays of the sun; they are only thirty or forty feet wide, but a league long in some places. They are, with few exceptions, lined with houses of merchandise and shops ornamented with silk-stuffs, porcelain, lacquerware, and other goods, admirably arranged, a knack in which the Chinese excel.

These streets present the appearance of the most charming corridors, and it would be a great pleasure to walk through them if the crowd of peasants were rather less, and the pavement rather better. The houses are covered with straw, and built for the most part of earth and bamboo; but the tents with which the streets are shaded only permit the shops to be seen, and thus hide this imperfection. The only house built by the Dutch during their term of possession, is now of some value. It is a large edifice consisting of three storeys, defended by a rampart of four half-bastions—a necessary precaution for Europeans in these distant countries, where one does not always find equity and good faith, and where fraud and injustice too often take the place of merit. This house overlooks the port, and could, in case of need, prevent a landing.

Tai-wan-foo has neither walls nor fortifications. The Tartars never place their forces or lock up their courage in the heart of a citadel; they prefer a fight on horseback in the open field. The port is good enough, affording a shelter from the wind, but the entrance becomes daily more difficult. Formerly, it was approachable from two sides, one called *Ta-kiang*, where the largest vessels were able to ride without trouble, and the other *Loo-men*, where the bottom is of rock, and where there are only nine or ten feet of water in the highest tides. The first passage is now impracticable; there are some places where there are not even five feet of water: the most there has ever been only reached seven or eight feet, and it is silting up daily by the washing of the sea sand. It was by this *Ta-kiang* that the Dutch vessels formerly obtained entrance into the port; and in order to defend the entrance from foreign vessels, they had built a citadel at the southern extremity of the Island, which would be excellent if it were not built upon the sand,—but still very suitable as a defence from those enemies which were most to be feared, namely, the Chinese and the Japanese. It is two minutes' walk to the west of Tai-wan foo, and commands the whole of the port, where vessels above two hundred tons are able to enter.

The part of Formosa under the dominion of the Chinese, is composed of two different nations—the Chinese and the aborigines. The former, attracted by the greed of gain, have converged to this place from the divers provinces of China. Tai-wan foo, Tong-kan hien, and Chu-lo hien are inhabited solely by Chinese; the only aborigines to be found there are those who serve them as domestics, or rather slaves. Besides these three towns, the Chinese have several villages, but none of them are very considerable, with the exception of Ngan-ping-ching. This fort stands at the foot of Zelanda Castle, which is the name given by the Dutch to the citadel I have spoken of above. At Ngan-ping-ching there are about four or five hundred families; and there is a garrison of two thousand men commanded by a Foo-tsiang, or Field-marshal.

The government and customs of the Chinese in Formosa differ in no wise from those of China. I will, therefore, only interrupt my narrative

to give you some idea of the government of the natives. These natives, who are subject to the Chinese, are divided into forty-five small towns or dwelling-places that they call *Che*—thirty-six in the north, and nine in the south. The northern *Che* are fairly populated, and the houses differ but very slightly from those of the Chinese. The nine southerly ones, however, are really nothing but clumps of huts, composed of mud and bamboo covered with straw, raised upon a sort of estrade three or four feet high, built in the form of an inverted funnel, some fifteen, twenty, thirty or even forty feet in diameter; a few are divided by partitions. They have neither chairs nor benches, nor table, nor bed, nor any furniture whatever. In the centre there is a kind of stove or furnace, raised two feet or a little more from the earth, upon which they do their cooking. They live principally on rice, small grain, and game. They catch the game running, or with their weapons. They run with surprising swiftness. I have been astonished myself at seeing them run faster than horses when they go with slack reins. This swiftness comes, according to the Chinese account, from the fact that up to the age of fourteen or fifteen years, their legs and loins are bandaged with excessive tightness. They use for weapons a sort of javelin, which they fling to a distance of seventy to eighty paces with unerring aim; and although nothing can be simpler than their bows and arrows, they never miss a pheasant on the wing, but make as sure of it as we do in Europe with a gun. Their manners at table are the reverse of cleanly; they have neither plates nor dishes, nor basins, nor spoons, nor chopsticks (*bâtonnets*). Whatever they may have prepared for their repast, is simply placed upon a wooden board or stool, and they eat with their fingers, just like monkeys. They eat the flesh half raw; the little fire that has been applied to it renders it excellent to their palates. For beds, they are quite satisfied with the fresh leaves of a certain tree, the name of which, however, I don't know, but which is very common in the country; and they spread them upon the ground, or upon the boards of their huts, and there they take their sleep. They are clothed in nothing but a simple cloth, with which they are covered from the waist to the knees; and, would you believe that, pride is so deeply-rooted in the heart of man as actually to exist and find nourishment in the midst of such abject poverty! Would you even believe it absolutely costs them more than the most civilized folks who pique themselves upon their luxury and magnificence? The latter borrow the skins of animals and the silk of worms, which they embroider with silver and gold: but our savage friends make use of their own skins, which they tattoo with all sorts of grotesque representations of trees, animals, and flowers, and which causes them such exquisite pain that they would die under the operation, they told me, if it were done all at once without any intermission. Indeed, they take several months over it, and sometimes an entire year. It is necessary, during this time, to put oneself every day under a kind of torture—and all this

merely to satisfy a craving to be distinguished from the herd, for it is not permitted to everybody indifferently, to carry these marks of magnificence. This privilege is only accorded to those who, in the judgment of the elders of the village, have surpassed others in running or the chase. Everybody, however, is permitted to blacken the teeth, and wear earrings, bracelets above the elbow or the wrist, and necklaces and coronets of small beads of different colours and sizes. The coronet terminates in a sort of *aigrette* of cocks' or pheasants' feathers, which they collect with much care. Just imagine these barbarous adornments upon the body of a man, lithe and slender, of an olive complexion, with long glossy hair hanging negligently over the shoulders, armed with a bow and a javelin, and having no garment but a two-or-three-foot cloth round the waist and reaching to the knees, and you will have the veritable portrait of a brave in the southern part of the Island of Formosa.

In the northern part, where the climate is a trifle less warm, they cover themselves with the skins of the deer they have killed out hunting, and of which they make a kind of coat without sleeves, of a shape rather like that of a dalmatic. They wear a cap in the form of a cylinder, made from part of the banana leaf, which they ornament with a series of crowns placed one on the top of the other, and attached by very narrow bands or by little plaits of different colours; and to this they add, like those of the south, an *aigrette* of cocks' or pheasants' feathers.

Their marriages are not so barbarous. Women are not sold as they are in China, and no attention is paid to the worldly status of the parties concerned, as is so customary in Europe; the parents, in fact, have very little to say in the matter. When a young man takes it into his head to marry, and has found a girl who pleases him, he goes for many days in succession to the door of her house with an instrument of music; if the girl eyes him favourably, she goes out and joins her suitor, and so they plight their troth. Afterwards they announce the fact to their fathers and mothers, who prepare the festival, which is given in the house of the girl, where the young man remains without returning to his father's. From that time, the young man looks upon his father-in-law's house as his own; he becomes the support of it; and he has no more to do with the house of his own father than European girls who quit their paternal roofs to go and live with their husbands. Consequently, they don't look upon it as a stroke of luck to have male children; they are only anxious to have girls, who will procure them sons-in-law to become the stay of their old age.

Although these islanders are entirely subject to the Chinese, they have still some remains of their ancient government. Each townlet elects three or four of the elders who enjoy the greatest reputation for probity. In virtue of this election, they become the chiefs and judges of the rest of the inhabitants; it is they who constitute the final appeal of all litigants; and if anybody refused to acquiesce in their judgment he would

be driven out of the community without any hope of ever being able to re-enter, while no other town would dare to receive him. Their tributes to the Chinese are paid in grain. As regards these tributes, there is in each townlet a Chinaman conversant with the language, who serves as interpreter to the mandarins. These interpreters, who ought to procure the relief of these poor people, are themselves unworthy harpies who prey upon them pitilessly : indeed, they are such petty tyrants that they drive even the patience of the mandarins to the verge of extremity as well as that of the islanders, who, however, are compelled to abstain from interfering with them for fear of courting still greater complications. Of twelve townlets which were under Chinese jurisdiction in the south, there now remain but nine ; three have rebelled, driven out their interpreters, paid no more tribute to China for three years, and have formed a league with the inhabitants of the eastern portion of the Island. It is a very bad example and will not fail to have its consequences. I mentioned it passing to the first literary mandarin in Formosa, a Chinese doctor, who had just been made viceroy of the province of Fo-kien. He replied coldly :—" It is all the worse for these savages, if they insist upon remaining in their savage condition ; we try to turn them into men, and they don't wish it. All the worse for them ! There are malcontents everywhere."

But savages though they be, according to certain maxims of the Chinese world, I believe them to be nearer to the true philosophy than a great number of the most celebrated Chinese sages. One never sees among them, even upon Chinese testimony, either cheating or quarrelling, or robbery or litigation, excepting against the interpreters. Their dealings are equitable, and they are attached to each other ; a man will never dare to touch anything you give him, without those who had joined in the labour partaking also of the fruits, a fact of which I have had frequent proof myself. They attend to the slightest signal given to them by their commander ; they are circumspect in their words, and upright and pure of heart. One can judge of this by a comparatively trifling incident. A Chinaman, whom the local mandarins had placed among my suite, gave expression to certain words which will not bear repetition. One of the islanders, who was barely thirty years old, and who knew a few words of mandarin, confronted him boldly in the presence of everybody. *Puh-haou, puh-haou*, said he [that is, "not good"] ; *woa-mên sin tsing* ["our hearts are pure"] ; *puh kan shwoh, puh kan siang* ["we would not dare to speak thus,—we would not even dare to think such things"] —*puh haou, puh haou !*

Before leaving Amoy, we had been informed that there were Christians in Formosa. Accordingly we made enquiries, and certainly there are none among the Chinese ; but there are traces as if Christianity had been known among the aboriginals from the time when the Dutch were in possession of the port. We have met several who are able to speak

the Dutch language, who read Dutch books, and who, in writing, use their characters. We have even found in their hands fragments of our five books (? the Pentateuch) in Dutch. They worship no idols; they have a horror of anything approaching such an act; but they perform no religious rites, and recite no prayers. Still, we have met with those who acknowledge a God, Creator of heaven and earth,—a God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; who say that the first man was called Adam, and the first woman Eve; that, having disobeyed God, they had drawn forth his anger upon them and all their descendants; and that it was necessary to have recourse to baptism to efface this stain, of which rite, too, they even knew the formula. Nevertheless we were unable to discover for certain whether they were in the habit of baptising or no. The Chinese, who served us as interpreters, assured us that as soon as a child is born, they take cold water and pour it upon its body; but as these interpreters are untrustworthy, and as at that time they were but very imperfectly acquainted with the language, we were unable to satisfy ourselves upon the point. It seems, from what we were able to gather, that they had no idea of any rewards or punishments in the next world; wherefore it is quite probable that they are not at any pains to baptise their children. We have tried, as far as we could, to instil into them the most necessary truths of our holy religion; we have recommended those who appeared rather better informed, to inculcate these important truths upon their fellow-citizens, and above all things to baptise their children as soon as ever they are born, in case of any opportunity arising for them to be instructed in the mysteries of the faith when they are capable of understanding. We left them the formula of baptism, but that was all we were able to do.

What pain for us, to be in the midst of so fair a harvest, and one which would have been so abundant, if only there had been apostolic labourers to cultivate it,—and yet, to be obliged to leave it without hope of assistance! It is impossible to reach Formosa from the coast of China under present circumstances; in vain has the attempt been made to pass, two or three times, but the door is closed to Europeans. A direct interposition of Providence, or a commission similar to our own, is the only thing which could effect an opening. The task would be easier, if there were some port on the eastern side. The country is not in the possession of any foreign power, as far as we know; the character of the inhabitants is not absolutely savage; and Japan is not a long way off. If these motives were to induce missionaries to carry thither the light of Truth, it would be easy for them to extend their zeal to the western portion, particularly in the southernmost extremity of the Island, where the inhabitants, under the dominion of the Chinese, are only, in two or three places, about a league distant from the people of the east. As the conversion of these poor folk is not the work of man, but the effect of the mercy of our Divine Master, let us endeavour to obtain it by prayers

and holy deeds. A day never passes, without my remembering these unfortunate people before the altar. May it please the Mercy of the Lord to grant the prayers that I offer for their conversion !

Although the Island of Formosa is not far distant from China, the Chinese, according to their history, had no acquaintance with it before the time of the Emperor Si, of the Ming dynasty, about the year of grace 1430, when the eunuch Wan-san-pao, returning from the west, was cast ashore there by a storm. This eunuch, finding himself in a strange country, the people of which appeared to him as savage as the land itself was beautiful, made some stay there in order to gather information about it for his master. But all the fruits of his care amounted to a few plants, and some medicinal herbs that he brought back with him, and which are used freely in China to this day with success.

In the forty-second year of the Emperor Kia-tsing, 1564 of our era, the the Ti-too, or Commodore, Yu-ta-yeou, in crossing the eastern sea of China, fell in with a corsair named Lin-tao-kien, who had lately taken possession of the Islands of Pong-hoo, where he had left a detachment of his soldiers. Now the corsair was a very proud and ambitious man, to whom love of glory was a passion, and who longed to make for himself a name. He no sooner perceived Yu-ta-yeou, than he advanced towards him at full sail, attacked him roughly, and would infallibly have defeated the Chinese squadron if the flag-officer himself had been less cool and intrepid. Yu ta-yeou received the first fire with perfect *sang-froid*; after which he turned the attack upon his enemy. The engagement lasted over five hours, and only finished at night, when Lin-tao-kien took flight and retired towards the Islands of Pong-hoo in order to refresh his troops, fetch the remainder of his soldiery, and then to renew the attack. But Yu-ta-yeou, like an experienced captain, followed him so closely, that at day-break Lin-tao-kien found the entrance to the port blockaded by the hostile squadron. His troops had suffered greatly in numbers during the battle, and the survivors, who had fallen victims to fear, impressed upon him that it was dangerous to attempt the entrance to the port. He, therefore, resolved to continue his route, and to cast anchor at Formosa. Yu-ta-yeou pursued him thither; but as he found the sea very shoal, and had no previous acquaintance with the entry of that port, he did not wish to endanger his vessels, so retired to the Islands of Pong-hoo, of which he made himself master. He made prisoners of all the soldiers whom he captured; he placed a good garrison there, and returned victorious to China, where he gave a full account of his discoveries and his expedition. The Court received his news with joy, and appointed a literary mandarin Governor of the Islands of Pong-hoo.

Formosa, says the Chinese historian, was at that time an untilled land, inhabited solely by barbarians. The cruel Lin-tao-kien considered that in its then condition, the Island would not suit him; so he butchered all the inhabitants that came into his clutches, and with unexampled inhu-

manity used the blood of these unfortunates to caulk his ships; then setting sail immediately, he retired to the province of Kwang-tung, where he perished miserably.

Towards the end of the year 1620, which was the first year of the Emperor Teen-kai, a Japanese squadron came and landed at Formosa. The officer in command found the country, rude as it was, sufficiently suitable for the establishment of a colony. He resolved to take possession of it, and with this view he left a detachment of soldiery there, with orders to glean all the information necessary for the accomplishment of his design. About the same time, a Dutch vessel, either going to or returning from Japan, was cast by a tempest on the Formosan shore, but found the Japanese not in a condition to afford them much protection. The country appeared fair in the eyes of these Dutchmen, says the Chinese historian, and very well adapted for commerce. They urged the pretext of being in want of certain refreshments, and necessaries to refit their ship which had suffered much in the storm. Some of them penetrated a short way into the interior, and, after having well examined the country, returned on board the vessel. The Dutchmen never touched their ship, the whole time their companions were absent; it was only when they returned that they began to think about refitting her. They begged the Japanese, with whom they were very anxious not to embroil themselves for fear of spoiling their commerce, to permit them to build a house on the shore of the Island, that is, at one of the entrances of the port, from which they were subsequently able to draw some advantage through their commercial relations with Japan. The Japanese at first rejected this proposition, but the Dutch insisted so earnestly, assuring them that they would occupy no more land than could be enclosed by an ox-skin, that the Japanese at last consented. So the Dutchmen took the skin of an ox, which they cut into little slips, excessively fine; these they placed end to end, and used them for measuring out the land they desired to take. The Japanese were at first much disgusted at such a march having been stolen upon them, but at length, after many reflections, they began to look upon the affair as rather amusing than otherwise. Mollified, they gave the Dutchmen permission to do whatever they pleased with the territory they had acquired. It was upon this ground that they built the fortress I have described above, and of which I send you herewith a plan. The gate still bears this inscription:—"Castel Zelanda, 1634."

The erection of this fort rendered the Dutch complete masters of the harbour, and of the only passage by which large vessels were able to enter. Perhaps the Japanese discovered the importance of the site too late. But be that as it may,—whether they took umbrage at the new fort, or whether they were dissatisfied with the Island itself, which was still uncultivated,—a short time afterwards they abandoned it entirely and returned to their own homes. So the Dutch found themselves sole masters of Formosa, for the islanders were in no position to offer any

resistance. In order to assure themselves of their position, they constructed upon the other side of the port, opposite the fortress of Zelanda, a house strongly fortified with four demi-bastions, of which I have already spoken.

While all this was going on, China was undergoing troublous times; partly owing to the civil distractions which had desolated so many provinces of this fair empire, and partly to the war she was waging against the Tartar, who eventually became her conqueror and founded the dynasty now reigning so gloriously under the Emperor Kang-hi. One of those who rendered themselves pre-eminent in their resistance of the Tartar, was a man of fortune in the province of Fo-kien, named Tsing-tsi-loong. From a small shopkeeper he had developed into the richest merchant in China; happy, if he had remained as faithful to God in his baptismal vows (for he was a Christian) as he was faithful to his country and his prince, so soon to fall under the dominion of a stranger!

Tsing-tsi-loong armed and fitted out a small flotilla, at his own expense, against the Tartar; he was soon followed by an innumerable number of Chinese vessels, and he became, by this means, the chief of one of the most formidable fleets that have ever been seen in Chinese waters. The Tartar offered him the dignity of king if he would only recognise him. He refused; but he did not long enjoy his good fortune. His son, Tsing-tsing-kung, succeeded him in the command of this powerful force. Excelling even his father in zeal for his country and her fortunes, he set on foot divers enterprises; he besieged several considerable cities, such as Hai-tsing in the province of Fo-kien, after having hewn in pieces the Tartar army that came to its assistance: Wan-chou, in the province of Che-kiang, Nan-king in Kiang-nan, and others. These first brilliant successes, however, lasted but a short time; he was eventually conquered by the Tartars, and driven out of China. Then it was that he turned his eyes and his ambition towards Formosa, out of which he resolved to eject the Dutchmen and establish a new dominion.

Now all this happened in the seventeenth year of the Emperor Shun-chi, father of Kang-hi, and the year 1661 of the Christian era,—this abandonment by Tsing-tsing-kung of his enterprise against China, and his retirement to Formosa with his formidable fleet. He called at the Pong-hoo islands and took possession of them on his way down. The Dutchmen, who doubtless imagined themselves safe from all molestations on the part of China, occupied as she was with her own troubles, had never taken the precaution to furnish either Pong-hoo or Tai-wan with troops; and the Chinese adventurer had nothing to do with these islands but to take possession of them as soon as he appeared. He left a hundred of his vessels there to keep guard, and sailed on with the remainder towards Formosa.

I learnt from a mandarin, who occupied the post of Field-marshal under

Tsing-tsing-kung at this time, that the entire guard of the fortress and harbour of Formosa consisted of eleven Dutchmen. The remainder of the garrison consisted partly of blacks from the Indies and partly of aborigines. But notwithstanding this inequality of forces, the Dutchmen resolved to defend themselves, and the event proved that they did so bravely and well.

The Chinese commander entered the harbour with his fleet, consisting of no less than nine hundred sail, through the Pass of Loo-men, a good league above the fortress of Zelanda. He then landed a detachment of soldiery, in order to attack the fortress by both land and sea. The siege lasted four entire months, during which the Dutchmen defended themselves with their cannon with more success than they had ever dared to hope for, and the besieger was desperate to see such courage and resistance in a handful of Europeans, against so numerous an army as his own.

As the Chinese were unacquainted with the use of cannon, they were unable to reply to those of the Dutch; thus their only hope was to reduce them to capitulation by famine. This, however, would be a work of time, during which, they considered, the besieged would be able to receive assistance from their vessels at Batavia, or those which were in commerce with Japan. The Chinaman knew exactly the difficulties of the enterprise; but he knew also that he was virtually an outlaw from China, without the faintest hope of ever returning under the Tartars, against whom he had just been carrying arms; besides which, he was well aware that if Formosa were closed against him he would be without resources, so he braced himself up for a last effort against the Dutch. There were, at this time, four Dutch vessels in port; and on each of these there was one Dutchman with a body-guard of Indians, while the seven others were shut up in the citadel of Zelanda. The Chinese commander resolved to sacrifice a few of his own vessels, which he accordingly stored plentifully with *feux d'artifice*, and then, taking advantage of a strong breeze from the north-east, he sent them against the Dutch ships. He succeeded above his hopes; for three out of the four were burnt. He then summoned the Dutchmen who were shut up in the fortress, to surrender; declaring to them that he would permit them to retire with all their effects, but threatening to give them no quarter should they persist any longer in defending their castle. The Dutchmen, who had only one vessel left, accepted his offer willingly; so they loaded their solitary ship with all their belongings, gave up possession of the place to the Chinese, and decamped.

The victorious general, having no longer anybody to interfere with his designs, distributed part of his troops in that district of the Island which belongs to the Chinese at the present day. He established a garrison at Ke-lung-chai, a fortress which had been previously built by the Spaniards, and constructed another fortress at Tan-chui-tsing at the mouth of the river Tan-chui, where his ships could ride safely at anchor. He fixed

upon the places known now-a-days as Chu-lo-yen and Fong-sang-hien, to build two towns, to which he gave the names of Tien-hien-hien and Wan-nien-hien. He established the present site of Tai-wan-foo as his capital, which he called Sing-ting-foo. He placed his court and his palace at the fortress of Zelanda, to which he gave the name of Ngan-ping-tsing, and which it still retains. It was then that Formosa commenced to assume a new shape. He established there the same laws, customs and form of Government which existed in China; but he did not long enjoy the fruits of his victory. He died about a year and a few months after having taken possession of the Island, and his son Tsing-king-mai "reigned in his stead." As, however, this youth had been brought up in the study of books, he paid no attention to the nourishment or cultivation of the country which his father had acquired at the cost of so much care and trouble; and this naturally cooled both the courage and the zeal of the troops in his service.

Now in the twelfth year of the reign of Kang-hi, (1673 of the Christian era), the Kings of Canton and Fo-kien revolted against the Imperial sway. Tsing-king-mai, anxious to revive the spirit of his soldiers, determined to espouse the cause of the King of Fo-kien against the Tartar. He armed all his vessels-of-war, and proceeded to confer with him upon the coast of his province. But as he expected to be treated as a Prince-regnant, and as the King of Fo-kien assumed the precedence, he was so enraged that he immediately declared war against him. Both sides fought bravely: but as the troops of Tsing-king-mai were composed of old soldiers, as many battles as they gave, so many victories did they gain. The King of Fo-kien was at last compelled to shave his head a second time, and abandon himself to the power of the Tartar. Tsing-king-mai returned to Formosa where he died shortly afterwards, leaving as his successor his son Tsing-ke-san, at a very tender age, under the guardianship of Liu-ku-kan and Fong-si-fan, two officers who had always been extremely attached to him.

The rebellion of Fo-kien being thus happily terminated to the advantage of the Tartars, they abolished the title of King, and, in the twenty-first year of Kang-hi (A. D. 1682) they established, as Governor of this province and of Che-kiang, a Tsung-tao, a dignity somewhat higher than that of Viceroy. The first incumbent of this post was the Tsung-tao Yao, a polished, clever and agreeable man. He was no sooner in charge than he proclaimed a general amnesty in Formosa to all who would place themselves under Tartar rule, promising to procure for them the same offices, honours, and prerogatives that they had possessed under their own chiefs. This proclamation had all the effect that Yao could have wished. The majority of those who had followed Tsing-king-kung, had abandoned their country, their wives and their children; far away in a strange country, untilled and almost uninhabited, without any hopes of gaining any advantages from it worth the name, they were

enchanted at finding so plausible an opportunity offered to them of returning to their homes. Many of them never stayed a moment to weigh the matter, but took leave of Tsing-ke-san and proceeded immediately to Fo-kien, where they were met so graciously by Yao, and received such favours at his hands, that they were soon followed by many others. Then Yao thought that the moment had come for taking possession of Formosa. He therefore fitted out a considerable fleet with all speed, under the command of a Lieutenant-general, to seize the Islands of Pong-hoo. This officer, however, met with greater resistance than he had imagined; for the soldiers, with the assistance of the Dutch artillery, defended themselves most vigorously, and were only compelled to surrender, at last, to the superior strength and numbers of the foe. Pong-hoo taken, the advisers of the young Prince judged that, in the present state of mind of the soldiery, it would be difficult to preserve Formosa, and without waiting for the Chinese commander to commence the attack, they despatched a vessel to carry a petition to the Emperor in the name of the Prince, in which he tendered his submission to the Imperial arms. Here is the Memorial in question, faithfully translated from the Chinese:—

“The King of Yen-Ping, Generalissimo of the Forces, Tsing-ke-san, presents this Memorial to the Emperor.

“When, humbled at the feet of Your Majesty, I consider the greatness of China—how that from time immemorial she has always sustained herself with *éclat*, and an infinite number of kings have succeeded each other upon her throne—I cannot refrain from the avowal, that it is an act of the special providence of Heaven which has chosen Your illustrious house to reign over the Nine Lands.* Heaven has only brought this to pass in order to perfect the five virtues.† This is evident from the good order, and the happy success of everything that Your Majesty undertakes. When I think with humility of my ancestors, I see that they always cherished a sincere attachment for their sovereigns, and always tried to prove their gratitude for the benefits that they received from the preceding dynasty, at a time when my house had received none from Your own glorious dynasty. It was this attachment to his Prince which compelled my grandfather Tsing-tsing-kung to leave his native country, and to go and clear [*défricher*] the waste-grounds of the East. My father Tsing-kin-mai was a man of letters, who would never have dared to expose himself on the brink of a precipice; like the kings of Ye-lang,‡ he occupied himself entirely in governing and instructing his people, confining himself to this corner of the Earth in the middle of the sea, without having any other ambition.

* That is to say, all the habitable globe. The Chinese divide the world into nine kinds of land:—viz., mountains of good earth; stony mountains; lands and hills; black and dry lands; sandy or gravelly lands; damp lands; fat or rich lands; yellow lands; and red lands.

† Charity, justice, courtesy or etiquette, prudence, and fidelity or good faith.

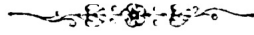
‡ An ancient kingdom on the confines of the province of Sze-chuen, the inhabitants of which were savages almost past reclaiming.

"Hitherto, I have enjoyed the benefits of my ancestors; and I, their grandson, never cease to testify my gratitude to them, in recalling continually the favours which they received from Heaven, with no wish or thought of aggrandising myself upon the Earth. Now that I see Your Majesty, resembling the sky, which by its broad expanse and elevation covers all beneath it, and resembling the Earth, which sustains all things by its solidity,—always inclined to do good, and to temper the effects of justice,—on which basis, Your Empire is governed; now that I see Your Majesty, like a rising Sun, whose light shines in a single instant from one end of the Earth to the other as soon as it appears above the horizon, and dissipates the fleecy vapours which gather upon the surface of the Earth,—how could I dare to think of anything else than to strive after perfection myself? It is this that I, a foreigner, regard as the only means of living happily. If I tried to pass my vessels on the western side [towards China], I should indeed be in fault; but alas! of the blood which once came to the East [Formosa] what now remains? Is it not like the languid dew which falls of itself in the early morning, and which evaporates upon the appearance of the Sun? How, then, should I undertake anything against Your Majesty? My heart is entirely submitted to You; such is the protestation I make to You in this petition. Your Majesty will see the effect of it. I know now that I have not been in the right way, but for the future I shall dare to walk freely in the flower-garden of charity and love, following in the footsteps of the Ki-ling. § It is my most earnest desire [*je souhaite avec passion*] to see Heaven and Earth united in one. The unfortunate inhabitants of this Island do not ask that they may be allowed to commit excess in wine, or satiate themselves with meat. If they are treated with gentleness they will be more favourably disposed by it to submission. The nature of fishes is to dive into precipices; the deepest waters are not too deep for them, and they enjoy a prolonged existence in the midst of the waves of the sea. And that what I have said to Your Majesty in this Memorial may be as binding upon me as an oath,—May the Sun never shine upon me more if these are not the true sentiments of my heart!"

The Emperor replied by commanding the Formosan Prince to quit his Island and repair to Peking. Tsing-ke-san, however, was afraid to go there, representing to the Emperor in a second Memorial which he sent with his seals and those of his principal officers, that having been born in southern climes, and being of a very delicate constitution, he dreaded the severe cold of the north; and therefore implored His Majesty for permission to retire into the province of Fo-kien, whence his ancestors had sprung. This Memorial had no effect; and the unhappy Prince, finding him-

§ The Ki-ling is a fabulous and mysterious animal of ancient Chinese lore. It was supposed to be born of a cow, and such was its benignity, that it would never dare even to crush the smallest blade of grass under its feet. It never appeared unless the Empire was governed by a holy Emperor.

self almost abandoned, was compelled to surrender Formosa again into the hands of the Tartars, and go himself to Peking ; where he is still living, with the rank of Count, which was conferred upon him on his arrival at the Imperial Court, being the twenty-second year of the Emperor Kang-hi, and 1683 of the Christian era.



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